

the past. Now, however, it is tending to multiply endlessly and has become just a barrier between community and community and a constant cause of mutual distrust. Marriage which was thought of as a sacramental contract to be entered into by persons competent by years to understand the significance of the social duty they are undertaking, is conducted in a language which few of the parties to the contract understand and the promises required both of bride and bridegroom are uttered by a priest who also, in many cases, does not understand what he is repeating.

The same statement applies to many other ceremonies which are observed in the form but of which the essential is completely ignored. Death ceremonies among the better classes are an incongruous medley of ritual suggested by many kinds of belief in a life beyond death. In most of these cases the ideas that informed the ceremonies are no longer consciously accepted. The loving brother Yudhisthira in the Mahabharata carried the corpse of the younger Bhima when he dropped dead. This society is similarly carrying the shell of many a custom from which the life has departed, loving it from habit and unwilling to give it up.

Defects like these are however inevitable at some stage in any culture. Perfection in society is perhaps

only a dream. While, however, it has to be
recognised
that defects are inevitable, a society
should not act as
if It thought them desirable. It should
brace itself to-
fight against the evil it finds in its midst.
Healthy
life for it consists in vigilance against the
form which
that evil assumes from time to time.
Society in the